



**For Immediate Release:**

April 15, 2013

## **HEALTH ADVISORY:**

### **Update: Meningococcal Meningitis Investigation**

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) was notified on April 9, 2013 of a single patient with meningococcal meningitis. As is always done in such situations, Public Health is conducting a thorough investigation. This investigation includes identifying contacts and offering preventive antibiotic treatment to any persons who had contact with the saliva or nose mucus from a patient with meningococcal meningitis.

At this point in the investigation, Public Health has not identified any other cases of meningococcal meningitis associated with this patient, nor identified any linkage between this patient and outbreaks that have been reported in other areas of the country.

Public Health is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to identify the specific strain of the disease from this patient. The specific strain is expected to be identified in the public health laboratory by the end of this week.

The CDC, CDPH and Public Health do not recommend a vaccination campaign in response to this one single patient with meningococcal meningitis in Los Angeles. However, we understand that even a single case of this serious disease can evoke a high level of concern in some individuals. We recommend that individuals considering immunization consult their personal health care provider.

Public Health is in contact with community organizations and health care providers to provide timely and accurate information.

Meningococcal meningitis disease is a rare infection of the lining of the brain and the spinal cord. The disease can cause brain damage, hearing loss, and even death. Many people can carry meningococcal bacteria in their nose and throat and not be sick. The bacteria can be spread by very close exposure to sneezing and coughing or direct contact with saliva (spit) or nose mucus (snot). Disease symptoms may include: fever, stiff neck, altered mental status, rash, severe headache, low blood pressure, and generalized muscle pains. Persons who have direct contact with the saliva or nose mucus of a person known to be infected with meningococcal meningitis should immediately contact their healthcare provider to receive appropriate antibiotic treatment.

Public Health continues the meningococcal meningitis investigation in close cooperation with CDC and CDPH. Because of medical confidentiality and privacy, Public Health will not comment on the details of the individual case or their contacts.



The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: @LAPublicHealth.

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